"And therfore wol I teche yow al the glose" versus "I wol nat glose": Glossing in the Chaucerian Canon.

by D. Jones

"The importance of glossing in the late Middle Ages cannot be sufficiently stressed," states Graham Caie (77). However, until the concentration of articles on glossing in this year's *Chaucer Review* (vol. 41), the past decade has produced barely a trickle of scholarship on the subject. Furthermore, perhaps understandably given the broadness and elusiveness of the term, these articles tend to have a narrow focus, such as studying the glosses on a particular Chaucerian manuscript. Valuable though such studies are, perhaps a need exists to pan out somewhat and provide an overview of the concept of glossing within its diverse cultural contexts and manifestations in Chaucer's age. With such a framework in place, it should then be possible to zoom in on each usage of *glose* (and its derivatives) in the Chaucerian canon, analyse each in greater detail than have previous studies (both in the contexts of their wider works and of the contemporary culture), and formulate a thesis to try to explain Chaucer's apparently ambivalent (paradoxical, even) attitude to glossing. In short, this study finds that Chaucer's own usages of *glose* are almost exclusively negative (perhaps even to a greater degree than previous scholarship has indicated), yet to claim that he was 'anti-glossing' *per se* would be erroneous.

As the background on its broader cultural context should show, glossing was an intrinsic part of the fabric of literary culture in Chaucer's time, and he was a full participant: glossing texts himself and having his glossed. Moreover, many scholars posit glossing as the very nexus of Chaucer's creative technique and genius: how he transforms (and combines) older texts into something startlingly original. In these ways, Chaucer seems clearly pro-glossing in personal practice and in *concept.*

However, in *name* (i.e., almost every time he used the term *glose* in his works), he seems clearly anti-glossing. This distinction seems crucial and perhaps helps explain the ambivalence or paradox. Chaucer was a glosser/glossator, but it seems he would never have used that actual term to describe his work. In a sense, he walked the walk but did not talk the talk. Though he continued to uphold the broader concept, the word itself seems to have become tainted in his mind. Possibly this taint came from the way the word came to be associated with execrable exegesis: specious, self-serving 'interpretation' of the Bible

(for which friars became notorious). Perhaps the taint came from the way the verb had changed so that it could refer to not only glossing a text, but also a person (perhaps the modern equivalent sense would be 'to finesse' someone, a deviously manipulative manoeuvre). For whatever reason, though, the sullying of the word in Chaucer's mind seems evident and manifests itself in almost every instance that he uses it in his works, as the later analysis aims to show.

First, though, some background on the broader cultural context of glossing should help reinforce this crucial distinction that seems to have existed in Chaucer's mind between the *concept* of glossing (as honest, helpful interpretation) and the *name* of glossing (tainted as deceptive): in Platonic terms, perhaps, the ideal conception and the flawed reality. The etymological evolution of the word illustrates its slipperiness and degeneration, as it morphs from its origin in Greek (*glossa*= 'tongue' and 'language') through Latin and Old French into Middle English, by which time it had acquired a more negative connotation. Robert Hanning highlights the "transference of meaning whereby glossing...becomes a strategic and usually coersive operation performed on people" (28) as well as texts. With this connotation acquired, *The Riverside Chaucer's* own 'Glossary' (1253) provides three definitions of 'glose(n)':

[1] interpret, explain (a text)
[2] use circumlocution
[3] flatter, cajole...deceive.

The overlap between the meanings seems clear, and it was probably the unscrupulous exploitation of these grey areas (especially by greyfriars?) that contributed to, or exacerbated, the degeneration of the term. Ironically, the meanings in [3], apparently the most recently acquired and most negative, "have been lost to Modern English" (Watts 59), but their star burned brightly, though ignominiously, in Chaucer's time. As Janette Richardson confirms, "For Chaucer *glose* is usually pejorative: 'From the original sense of "gloss," "interpret," the word passes to the idea of irrelevant or misleading comment, and so to outright deception'" (*Riverside* 877). The studies of Lawrence Besserman, Thomas Goodman, and William Watts also indicate that this most negative connotation predominates, reflecting the general trend in Middle English as a whole. Most recently, Laura Getty similarly concludes that, "Glossing...consistently represents deception in Chaucer's works" (53).

Admirable though these studies are, none of them is completely comprehensive in analysing all of the *glose* usages in the Chaucerian *oeuvre* (as it appears in *Riverside*).[1] Indeed, neither is the *Riverside*'s list of usages quite complete in its Glossary (1253).[2] Moreover, a glance at the *Riverside*'s definitions of each usage of *glose* in this Glossary would give the impression that approximately half the time Chaucer used it to mean "interpret" (innocuous meaning [1]) and only half the time to mean "deceive" (malignant

meaning [3]).[3] However, even when the ostensible meaning is indubitably "interpret," analysis of the context reveals that Chaucer is employing the word with distinctly pejorative connotations, invariably with undertones of 'deception.' The total number of usages seems to be nineteen, and an analysis of each, within its context, should demonstrate that to describe the term *glose* as "usually pejorative" represents something of an understatement: in almost every single instance, some pejorative nuance may be reasonably inferred.

Yet Chaucer was not anti-glossing *per se*, this apparent paradox reflecting the disjoint between the *concept* and the *term* in Chaucer's mind. In concept and practice, done correctly, Chaucer seems to have been clearly pro-glossing, as was everybody else. In his day, a manuscript deemed unworthy of gloss would have been a sorry specimen indeed. As Martin Irvine confirms, the presence of prominent gloss was the "chief mark of a text's status" (90), conferring prestige. Thus, authoritative classical texts and, especially, the Bible received the full glossing treatment.[4] It was "universal practice in medieval manuscript culture" (87). *Not* glossing was unthinkable; it was eminently desirable.

The way that the practice of glossing developed in the Middle Ages demonstrates its desirability. Besserman explains that, at first, for early Christian writers on Scripture, a *glossa* simply meant an "explanation of a verbal difficulty," just a "single word," but then the term "came to designate expository comments on word or phrase in Scripture, and finally a running commentary on one or more entire biblical books" (65). Given an inch, the gloss took a mile, so it needed far more space allocated to it on the page. Hence the "text and gloss format" (Irvine 88), the two going together hand in glove, became standard. Even so, the format was further modified to accommodate the snowballing gloss. In the Carolingian era, the main text was in the larger, middle column, surrounded by gloss in all four margins, so the "gloss formed a frame" (88).

After the twelfth century, the "2-column layout" emerged, still framed all around by gloss. In addition, "interpretative glosses began to be written between the lines also" (Irvine 89). Gloss was seeping into every nook and cranny, ever encroaching, now physically infiltrating the text; not that this was considered a bad thing. Rather, this layout only underscored the symbiosis of text and gloss in its ideal conception, the "ideal dynamic of reading and interpreting" (Goodman 64). As Mary Carruthers characterises it, "The function of glossing is to elucidate an obscure text...properly used, glossing is a means of arriving at truth" (209), or "of reaching a level of understanding which the mere 'letter' did not reveal" (Minnis, 'Glosynge,' 106). As such, text and gloss enjoyed an "inseparable textual relationship" (Irvine 89).

This conception held true for both canonical and authoritative classical texts. Thus, a "multitude of manuscripts from the age of Chaucer exemplify the text and gloss format" (Irvine 90). Below are two examples. The first is a copy of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* with the Latin commentary of Nicholas Trevet, and the second is a copy of Chaucer's translation of same, *Boece.*

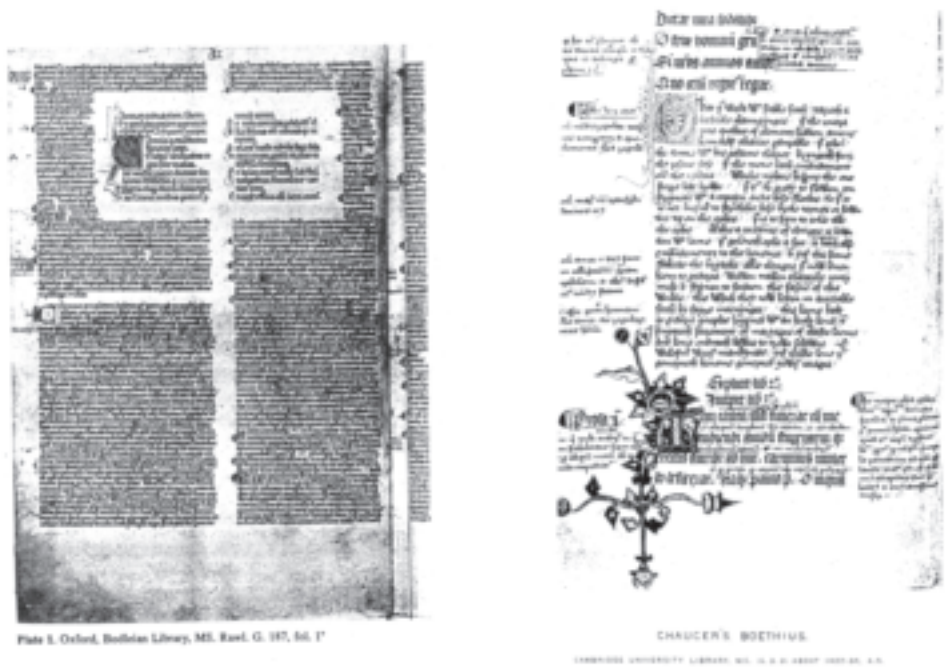

Plate I. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. G. 187, fol. 1r

CHAUCER'S BOETHIUS

Watts affirms that, “We have every reason to believe that the glosses in *Boece* are Chaucer’s own” and that “Chaucer himself was a practicing glossator” (62).[5] He glossed the texts of others, and his own texts were glossed. The Ellesmere Manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* is the “richest in glosses of all the manuscripts” (Silvia 29). Daniel Silvia speculates that, “the most likely conclusion one can draw is that Chaucer was...[most of the glosses’]...author” (28/29). Larry Benson guardedly concurs that “at least some of the glosses are most likely Chaucer’s own” (*Riverside* 797).[6] Regardless of whether Chaucer wrote most, or only some, of the glosses on El, their importance seems beyond doubt. Caie comments that the

> glosses are given a highly prominent position side-by-side with the text...the glosses are written in as large and as careful a hand as the actual text, which is placed off-centre to make room for the glosses...In a sense, it is a misnomer to call them ‘marginalia’ at all, and one might safely assume that the Ellesmere scribe considered the glosses to be an important part of the work as a whole. (350).

Once again, the impression is that the gloss was part and parcel of the text. As A. J. Minnis confirms, “Throughout the Middle Ages, text and gloss went together like the proverbial horse and carriage, their conjunction being simply assumed...the system itself was never seriously called into question” (‘Glosynge,’ 123).

On the contrary, such was the prestige of the gloss, sometimes, that it seems to have even superceded the text itself in importance. Purely visually, looking at a page the equivalent of an atoll of text in an ocean of gloss, which of the two might be assumed to be prized and prioritised? When Chaucer translated *Boece*, in parts he "translated not what was before him as the text of Boethius, but the explanatory commentary" (*Riverside* 1004), too, making it a "translation of text and gloss" (Irvine 94).[7] Meech also shows how Chaucer, in composing his *Legend of Ariadne*, probably took information from glosses on manuscripts of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (185, 193, 194, 201). The lines between text and gloss become blurred as the protean gloss metamorphoses into text. Thus, the gloss 'improves' the text as it becomes more fully incorporated.

Similarly, the glosses on the Ellesmere and Hengwrt manuscripts (and others) were "considered as an integral part of the text by scribes for a hundred years" (Caie 77) as they faithfully copied them along with Chaucer's text. Indeed, some copyists "added the Ellesmere glosses, although the texts themselves had been copied from non-glossed manuscripts," indicating "there are certain gloss 'traditions' which are sometimes different from those of the text" (Caie 351). Stephen Partridge confirms that "glosses are shared by manuscripts not closely related in text" (88), raising the curious possibility that the gloss on a page might refer to a word/sentence/passage that might be different, or not even exist, in the actual text of that manuscript.

In a way, the gloss takes on a life of its own. Biblical glosses were sometimes learnt by heart, separate from the text, or, other times, became so inextricably linked in the popular imagination to a specific Scriptural passage that their veracity could become uncritically assumed (it almost literally became 'gospel'). Caie comments upon this "use in the later Middle Ages of glossed texts in teaching subjects such as canon law as well as theology...authors such as John Donne in the seventeenth century used the *Glosa* 'without recourse to the *originalia*'" (77). Similarly, Sheila Delany describes how, for many people, "'Ovid' meant the moralization [the *Ovide Moralisé*] rather than the original text" (124); the glossed version had, in the eyes of some, magically metamorphosed into something 'better,' or even more 'authentic,' than Ovid's own original work.[8] Perhaps this process of glossing had grown so much that it had started to become too big for its boots (or books, in this case).

While the glossing of most important manuscripts continued as an unquestioned matter-of-course until at least the fifteenth century, there was a growing awareness that glossing was not always as helpful and honest as it purported to be. Hanning contends that the "idea that a gloss manipulates rather than explains its text may seem a peculiarly modern one, but medieval scholars and satirists were by no means unaware of the possibilities of such textual harassment" (29). In particular, the glossing of Scripture in sermons had come to be regarded with suspicion and resentment. This contributed hugely to giving glossing its bad name. The way in which certain preachers skewed Scripture as they 'interpreted' it caused antago-

nism. Their glossing came to be regarded as a contaminant rather than a complement to Scripture; text and gloss were no longer going together like the proverbial horse and carriage.[9] As John Alford affirms, "Well before Chaucer's time [*glosynge*] had come to mean not only 'commenting on Scripture' but also (an indication, perhaps, of popular cynicism about the method), 'perverting the meaning of, lying, deceiving'" (198).[10] Besserman concurs that, "Chaucer lived at a time when glossing the Bible was acquiring a very bad name, as the 'spiritual' sense was being stretched by the likes of the friar in the Summoner's Tale for purely selfish ends" (68).

Friars were particularly notorious as hypocrites and false glossators, and thus became unpopular figures.[11] The secular clergy resented the friars' emergence and felt they were treading on their toes and stealing their thunder (and fire and brimstone). The friars horned in on all the "lucrative ministrations" (Williams 503): preaching, hearing confession and granting absolution, and burying the dead. They were seen as fast-working, footloose mavericks, supremely hypocritical for their money-grabbing. John Fleming explains how St Francis "considered the mere touching of coins a major offense for a friar, and...likened money to excrement" (698), so grasping friars used "outrageous and ingenious glosses" (695) to keep their hands clean, and the *letter* of the law technically intact, by instead using sticks to rake in the cash. However, it was the way that friars had become associated with "virtuostic pulpit performance and a willingness to manipulate Scripture egregiously (or ignore it altogether)" (Hanning 10) that particularly riled people. The Prologue of the C text of Langland's *Piers Plowman* laments how friars "glosede the gospel as hem good likede" (line 58, quoted Hanning 11). Goodman gives an example of the preposterous glossing of a friar in Newcastle 1379-80, coming up with the bizarre interpretation that "only hermaphrodites" (59) had to perform annual confession.

The friars found themselves fighting against an ongoing chorus of derision. Such diverse religious figures as the mystic Richard Rolle, Richard FitzRalph (Archbishop of Armagh), and John Wyclife himself were up in arms against (not giving alms to) friars: "All of these men among others argue for a greater priority of the text over the gloss of Scripture" (Goodman 65).[12] Not surprisingly, there was a "movement to translate the Bible into English" (Besserman 69). A vernacular Bible would cut out the middle man; people could simply read the Bible themselves without being exposed to spurious glossing. Needless to say, the friars raged, in vain, against the idea of such a Bible.[13] As Besserman demonstrates (69), this movement for an English Bible and the related anti-fraternal movement both evince the strong contemporary concern over execrable exegesis of Scripture. This is the type of glossing (i.e., deceptive interpretation) to which Chaucer, along with many of his contemporaries, objected, and quite possibly this association is what tainted the term in his mind.

Chaucer's apparent distaste for the term *glose,* though, never stopped him performing his own glossing activities. He glossed manuscripts and let his be glossed. Moreover, Chaucer's fundamental cre-

ative *modus operandi* might be characterised as inspired ("intertextual") glossing. When did he ever take a leaf out of an earlier writer's book and merely stick it into his own creative work in an unmediated way? He almost always imprinted his own original interpretation on it (often having consulted other sources, then synthesising or distilling them into his own reworking: he fuses his muses, textually). Watts hails the *Troilus* as "Chaucer's most spectacular exercise in glossing" (64), for the way he ingeniously combines *Il Filostrato* and *De Consolatione*, and other examples abound. On a smaller scale, Lowes lauds Chaucer's *Legend of Philomela* as a "fresh exemplification of his favorite *modus operandi*," as he uses *Metamorphoses* as the "basis of his own *rifaciamento*, and freely and skilfully supplements it from the French[the *Ovide Moralisé*]": "'Two are better than one,' might well have served as Chaucer's motto" (317). Similarly, Meech appreciates how Chaucer "shaped literary mosaics of the highest artistry" (204). In each case, much gets glossed in translation by Chaucer. Irvine argues that "Chaucer's rewriting and interpreting of Ovid, Vergil, or Macrobius in a new poem is thus the formal equivalent of the supplementary text of commentary transcribed in the margins" (87), an invisible gloss on the works of earlier authors, creatively recon*text*ualising their narratives. Watts mentions Chaucer's "association of glossing with poetry itself," how he "frequently employs glossing to probe the limit and authority of the text" (64). Hanning cites the Wife of Bath and the friar of the Summoner's Tale as "preeminent examples of Chaucer's interest in 'how to do things with (and to) texts'" (9). Hanning also shows Marie de France's delight in realising the creative potential of glossing older texts: "discovering or imposing new significances...she can integrate glossing into her art as a vehicle of meaning, mastery, and wit" (33), and Chaucer seems also to have enthusiastically embraced these creative possibilities. Judging from the results, such 'glossing' appears both fruitful and desirable.

However amenable Chaucer might have been to 'glossing' in these ways, though, he never appears to have ever used the actual (nominal) term *glose* in describing or endorsing such practices. Instead, his usage of the term suggests that it had become tainted in his mind, possibly through its inimical associations with fallacious interpretations of the 'spirit' of Scripture (especially by friars). Thus, even when Chaucer employs *glose* in contexts outside explicit Scriptural exegesis, the term nevertheless almost always seems to carry the same negative connotations, as should become apparent in the following analysis of Chaucer's usages of the term. This analysis of all Chaucer's uses of *glose* will proceed in the following order: firstly, instances of the much rarer nuance of 'circumlocution' (meaning [2]), then ostensible instances of meaning [1] ('interpretation'), trying to show the undertones of 'deception' or 'flattery' (meaning [3]) becoming stronger in each successive case, until, finally, come the cases where this meaning of 'deception' is clear and acknowledged.

Instances of *Glose* with Meaning [2]: "Circumlocution"

Although the Parson's Prologue comes at the end of the *Canterbury Tales*, it seems an apt point to start a study of Chaucer's various uses of *glose* for two reasons. Firstly, the Parson's Prologue appears to show one of the rarer instances of meaning [2]: 'to use circumlocution.' In addition to this connotation, though, meaning [3], 'to deceive,' also seems to be darkly lurking, so it captures the elusiveness of the term. The Parson rejects the Host's request to tell a fable, stating that St Paul

> Repreveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse
> And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse.
> Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest,
> Whan I may sowen whete, if that me lest? (X. 33-36).

The Parson is only concerned with the truth: the wheat, not the chaff. He then explains that he will not employ any literary frippery, no alliteration (43) or rhyme (44), as he eschews such extraneous embellishments, circumlocutions, and fancy tricks:

> And therefore, if yow liste—I wol nat **glose**—
> I wol yow telle a myrie tale in prose (45-46).

'Glose' here seems to encompass both the meanings of 'to deceive' (which will be analysed in more detail at the end of this paper, after all the other usages with that connotation) and the meaning of 'to use circumlocution.' What the Parson has in mind, perhaps, is a tale that would be the literary antithesis of a 'glossy magazine' of today (i.e., superficially bright and attractive but essentially insubstantial). The Parson is all about substance ("I take but the sentence," 57), getting to the point, keeping it simple, and rejecting artifice.

The Merchant makes a similarly plain-dealing claim for himself in his use of the term 'glose,' although the subject matter of his Tale would certainly be considered 'wrecchednesse' by the Parson. Nevertheless, this seems to be the only other instance (and perhaps the purest instance) in the Chaucerian corpus of meaning [2]: 'to use circumlocution.' The Merchant describes the rather indelicate scene of how jealous January, old and blind, is being duped into giving his young wife, May, a bunk up into the pear tree, in which Damyan, the lusty young squire, is waiting to welcome her with open arms and other extended anatomical appendages:

...up she gooth–
Ladyes, I prey yow that ye be nat wrooth;
I kan nat **glose**, I am a rude man–
And sodeynly anon this Damyan
Gan pullen up the smok, and in he throng. (IV. 2349-53).

The *Riverside* gives this as the only example of Chaucer using *glose* to mean "to use circumlocution" (1253), and this clearly appears to be the correct connotation here.[14] The Merchant laments his rhetorical inability to embellish, to dress up this episode of undressing and crude copulation in more genteel language for his audience. Regarding the lovers' tryst amidst the "fresshe leves grene" (2327), the Merchant regrets that he is unable to beat about the bush and must therefore get straight to the meat. Being a "rude man" (i.e., 'unlearned'), he can only describe the amorous action in layman's terms. As Watts states, the Merchant is "unable to supply a polite euphemism" and thus cannot "gloss over" (59) what is occurring. Of course, to 'gloss over' something, in Modern English, also carries negative connotations, and a similarly negative nuance seems implied in the Merchant's use of the term *glose* here. Thus, Besserman contends that, although the Merchant "apologizes for his frankness" (67), perhaps it is not such a terrible thing because, in this usage here, "*glose* comes close to meaning 'to lie'" (67. i.e., again shades of meaning [3], 'to deceive,' also seem present).

Instances of *Glose* with Ostensible Meaning [1]: "Interpretation" (But Undertones of Meaning [3]: "Deception" or "Flattery"?)

Shades of meaning [3] can also be found lurking beneath the ostensible meaning (this time of 'interpretation,' i.e., meaning [1]) of *glose* in *The Romaunt of the Rose* Fragment C. Although Chaucer is widely acknowledged as Fragment A's translator, he is not usually credited with doing C (its translator "may or may not be Chaucer," Delany 120). Nevertheless, C is quite "Chaucerian in language and manner" (*Riverside* 686, much more so than B) and at least supplies a couple more contemporary uses of *glose*. Besides which, the *Roman* exerted a tremendous influence on Chaucer and his contemporaries, and, claims Watts, "glossing is an important feature of the *Roman of the Rose* itself" (60), especially in Jean de Meun's extension of it, of which the English *Romaunt* C is a partial translation.[15]

The first instance of *glose* in *Romaunt* C comes when Fals-Semblant (who operates under the guise of being a mendicant friar himself), in making his confession to the God of Love, "criticizes the teaching of mendicant friars" (Goodman 61), admitting that they have no warrant for their self-aggrandiz-

ing claim that “their poverty and begging were modeled upon the example of Christ and the apostles” (David, *Riverside* 1113). Fals-Semblant exposes this fundamental fraternal fallacy that Christ and the apostles ever begged, directing his audience to check Scripture on the point (crucially, just the text, not the gloss):

> And if men wolde ther-geyn appose
> The nakid text, and lete the **glose**,
> It myghte soone assoiled be (6555-7).

Doing so will expose the mendaciloquent mendicants.[16] As Delany explains, “The text is Holy Writ...and its nakedness refers to the absence of interpretive glosses” (120). The “literal text as opposed to the interpretation” (David, *Riverside* 1114) contains the truth. In this way, confirms Goodman, “text and gloss are polarized in their respective truth-functions” (61): text is truth; gloss is falsehood/deception (meaning [3]).

Fals-Semblant provides a further example of how he and his ilk are able to co-opt Scripture to suit their nefarious purposes in which, again, the words “disceyven” and “glose” are only a few lines apart. Love has been shocked to hear that Fals-Semblant “dredist...not God” (6799), and Fals-Semblant proves this by demonstrating some of the dastardly tricks that he employs “to disceyven” (6884) people, in this case how he suckers them into confessing secrets to him (only for him not to respect their confidence). Fals-Semblant supplies, “withouten drede” (6885), a meta-commentary on his spiel as he rehearses it, he claims, from “Seynt Matthew, the gospelere” (Matt. 23.1-8, 13-15, a “favorite text against hypocrites,” David, *Riverside* 1114) about the Scribes and the Pharisees sitting

> ‘Uppon the chaire of Moyses’—
> Thus it is **glosed**, douteles,
> That is the Olde Testament,
> For therby is the chaire ment— (6889-992).

Aside completed, Fals-Semblant then resumes his gospel quotation. This aside, though, is part of his act. It adds credibility to his spiel because he shows he knows the proper gloss (“chaire” here being the figurative gloss for Moses’s “position of authority,” *Riverside* 1227). Fals-Semblant is using this gloss as a component of his misuse of Scripture to deceive people. Here is a hypocrite railing against hypocrites for his own benefit. Thus, the context of this *glosed* is important. Although the *Riverside* gives its meaning as “interpreted” (1253), the cynicism and heresy behind Fals-Semblant’s “interpretation,” designed to deceive, only become clear from the context of the *Romaunt*.

The *Roman* also features prominently in what is probably Chaucer's most positive usage of *glose*. In the *Book of the Duchess*, the narrator falls asleep holding Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, then dreams he sees both the "story of Troye" (326, *The Aeneid*) depicted in his bedroom windows,

> And alle the walles with colours fyne
> Were peynted, bothe text and **glose**,
> Of al the Romaunce of the Rose. (332-4).

Watts characterises this as "Chaucer's most graphic depiction of the relationship between glossing and poetry" (59) and speculates that Chaucer here "has in mind the physical page of a manuscript, with the text on one part of the page and the glosses in the margin or between the lines" as "the gloss informs both the shape and meaning of the text and thereby becomes an inextricable part of what the text is" (60). This seems to be a rare instance (in Chaucer) of the text and gloss working together in harmony. As Goodman confirms, "Here text and gloss form a figure of completeness, an integral whole, as they were supposed to in ideal practice" (61). Irvine argues that, for the *Duchess'*s narrator, this image serves to "portray the textuality of the poem he is engaged in writing, an extended gloss on Ovid[the story of Ceyx and Alcione]" (104) and thus inspires him to compose it (when he awakens, *Metamorphoses* is still in his hand, 1329). Thus, this ideal figure of "both text and glose" on the wall seems to show Chaucer literally re-envisioning texts. Glossing other texts is an ineluctable (and often desirable) part of the process of the creative composition of a new text. This instance of *glose* seems unique in Chaucer as it represents the pure and positive meaning of "interpretation" (i.e., meaning [1] as the *Riverside* gives it, 1253), with no undertones of "deception."[17] In this case, the *glose*/interpretation would seem to complement, even enhance, the text. This *glose* of the *Roman* seems to be all good.

Conversely, neglecting to *glose* the *Roman* is tantamount to a crime in the eyes of the God of Love in the *Legend of Good Women*. In the *Legend*'s Prologue, he upbraids the narrator/Chaucer (his "mortal fo," G248) for not having glossed the *Romaunt*:

> For in pleyn text, withouten nede of **glose**,
> Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose,
> That is an heresye ayeins my lawe,
> And makest wise folk fro me withdrawe (F328-31, cf. G254-7).

Chaucer 'busts' the same rhyme again here (glose/Rose), but the sort of *glose* that the God of Love is talking about here is completely different from the ideal function of *glose* envisioned by dreamer-narrator of

the *Duchess*. As Lisa Kiser comments, the God of Love has read Chaucer's *Romaunt* and *Troilus* and crudely distilled their meanings into "morals that grossly oversimplify" those texts, such as "Love is folly," and "Women are untrue" (78). The God of Love fears that, *sans* gloss, other readers will take these same messages and thus reject Love. Instead, the God of Love wants his literature all dressed, fully glossed to suit his view of the world and his agenda, even though this may well be a departure from the truth. He wants to be indulged and flattered (deceived, even). Hence he effectively commands Chaucer/the narrator, in the *Legend*, to gloss the women's biographies as much as is necessary to portray them as perfect exempla of faithful lovers in Alceste's mould. Chaucer/the narrator must omit or 'gloss over' any details that might contradict such portrayals, while stressing or finessing other details, or even completely inventing details (interpolation as 'interpretation') to support such portrayals as he performs the God of Love's "reductively propagandistic task" (Delany 139). Thus, claims Kiser, the "God of Love is parody of the kind of poetic artifice that Chaucer wished to reject" (65), mainly because of the deceptive interpretation inherent in it. For his part, Chaucer seems to prefer "pleyn text" or "naked text" (G86, in echo of Fals-Semblant above) because the "literal is prior and superior to the superfluous explanation" (Goodman 61), or, in this case, a falsified interpretation.[18] The *Riverside* gives the God of Love's *glose* as "interpretation" (meaning [1]), and this is correct up to a point; however, once again, if this *glose* is taken within its full context, it seems to intimate that the sort of "interpretation" that he would like to see is something of a "deceptive interpretation" (i.e., meaning [3]).

This same, slight nuance of "deception" lurking beneath the more obvious meaning of "interpretation" for *glose* also seems evident in the Epilogue of the Man of Law's Tale.[19] The Host asks the Parson to tell a tale, then accuses him of being a Lollard for criticizing his profuse profanity. Before the Parson can either respond or start to tell his tale, though, another pilgrim interjects and objects,[20]

> ...Heer schal he nat preche;
> He schal no gospel **glosen** here ne teche.
> ...
> He wolde sowen som difficulte,
> Or springen cokkel in our clene corn. (II. 1179-83).

The Lollard charge seems a red herring. As the *Riverside* contends, the Parson's theology seems "perfectly orthodox," besides which Lollards were "almost unanimously opposed to pilgrimages." Moreover, "Wyclife and his followers were much opposed to 'glossing,' preferring literal interpretation of the Bible" (863). Thus, it would seem strange to worry that a Lollard would ever *glosen* Scripture by supplying fatuitous or false interpretation. Although the Parson is almost certainly not a Lollard, and when the time actu-

ally comes for him to tell a tale he prefaces it by insisting "I wol nat glose," the interrupting pilgrim still instinctively suspects that he will *glose*. It seems that, perhaps, being a "man of the cloth" was practically synonymous with being a "man of the gloss" in the popular imagination. Thus, as Besserman avers, the speaker "fears that if the Parson is allowed to 'gloss' the gospel he will spread heresy—*glosen* here means 'to interpret falsely'" (67), to sow weeds in the clean corn. Glossing can be a black art used to deceive. Once again, in the full context of the passage, meaning [3] seems to be lurking.

Stronger nuances of *glose* as deception seem evident in the usages of the term by the Wife of Bath and the despicable friar of the Summoner's Tale. Nobody uses the term more frequently than these two; the word trips off their tongues. The friar employs it three times (an unholy trinity), and so does Alison. Thus, between just the two of them, they account for almost a third of all the uses of *glose* in the Chaucerian corpus. They perpetrate flagrant abuses and execrable exegeses of Scripture through their 'glossing,' mangling it to suit their own nefarious ends. Not surprisingly, D. W. Robertson rebukes them harshly: "It is difficult to see how Chaucer could have more vividly illustrated the abuses of false spiritual interpretation than he has in his accounts of the Wife of Bath, the friar of the Summoner's Tale, and the Pardoner" (334). Hanning marvels at how the pair "quote incompletely and out of context; above all, they gloss, or explain, biblical passages with a self-indulgence that approaches blasphemy" (9), being "expert glossers (i.e., interpreters) of received wisdom for their own peculiar advantage" (5). Thus, Hanning characterises them as "two consummate text-torturers" (5) and claims that "Chaucer exploits all the ambiguities of glossing" (9) through these "brilliant tours de force that are Friar John and the Wife of Bath" (20).

A difference between their glossing, though, is that whereas the Wife's abuses the letter, the friar's abuses the spirit. This unholy disjoint between the letter and the spirit is clear in the Wife's first use of 'glose' early in her Prologue, as she considers the question of whether remarriage is acceptable in God's eyes:

> Men may devyne and **glosen**, up and doun,
> But wel I woot, expres, withoute lye,
> God bad for us to wexe and multiplye;
> This gentil text kan I wel understonde. (III. 26-29).

As Goodman declares, she "sets text and gloss in opposition" as "[i]ntellectual speculation and explanation, verging on distortion [i.e., gloss]...are bootless for her own understanding of God's text in *Genesis* I:28" (61). The *Riverside* gives "glosen, up and doun" as "interpret in every way" (105), and the Wife here disdains such arbitrary, airy-fairy interpretations with this "direct attack on glossing" that is "consistent with other late-medieval complaints against the abuses of glossing," especially "excessive glossing" (Watts

64). Instead, she specialises in the "twisting of actual lines and teachings from the Bible in an attempt to make them support her own outrageous positions" (Reiss 57, in this case having been married five times already). The source of her biblical 'teachings' is St Jerome's *Epistola Adversus Jovinianum*.[21] Alfred David describes the Wife's method as being "to present Jovianian's case, which Jerome had set forth only in order to demolish it" (138). She willfully seizes the wrong end of the stick. For example, concerning the issue here of remarriage, "what Paul tolerates as a necessary evil, the Wife of Bath celebrates as a positive good," rendering her sermon a "travesty of the Pauline teachings on marriage and celibacy" (David 138).

Her "travesty" of the Pauline teachings on celibacy is the occasion of her next deployment of the term *glose.* Like Lady Raison in the *Roman*, Alison ponders the reason why God endowed humans with private parts:

> Trusteth right wel, they were nat maad for noght.
> **Glose** whoso wole, and seye bothe up and doun
> That they were maked for purgacioun
> Of uryne, and oure bothe thynges smale
> Were eek to knowe a femele from a male,
> And for noon oother cause—say ye no?
> The experience woot wel it is noght so. (118-124).

As with her previous usage of the term, she gives short thrift to what she considers to be the various arbitrary and fallacious interpretations of the purpose of private parts. The *Riverside* gives this *glose* as "interpret" (106), yet the Wife's scorn for such interpretations here seems palpable ('Yeah, right!', 'Whatever!', or 'Pull the other one!' seems to be the gist). She is using the term with negative connotation, shades of meaning [3] again: deceptive interpretation. However ingeniously (and disingenuously, in this case) authorities might interpret the functions of humans' procreative organs as purely being to differentiate between the genders or for micturition, she knows it is simply not so. She argues that these organs are also for grinding. Once again, she "asserts her trust in the literal meaning of things, no matter how much men try to *glose* that meaning away" (Besserman 67). She returns to St Jerome to plunder more literal 'support' for her case (including a highly dubious reference to the 'marriage debt,' 130), all wrenched meretriciously out of the proper context. Lee Patterson notes how her "*sermon joyeux* explicates Paul's text to show that it means the opposite of what a more orthodox exegete would claim it says" (308). Thus, she "turns grudging concession into glorious mandate" (David 142).

Alison also uses *glose* in connection with sexual activity the final time that she employs the term. Here, she describes how Jankyn, her favourite husband (number five, twenty years her junior), would beat

her but could also flatter and finesse her into bed:

> But in oure bed he was so fressh and gay,
> And therwithal so wel koude he me **glose**,
> Whan that he wolde han my *bele chose* (508-10).

The *Riverside* gives this *glose* as "flatter" (112) and/or "mislead verbally" (877), consistent with definition [3]: flatter, cajole, deceive. Perhaps even a combination of those nuances, such as in the phrase "flatter to deceive," would be appropriate here because his true colours soon re-emerged with more beatings and readings from his "book of wikked wyves" (685). However, he could always read her like the proverbial book, then *glose* her accordingly. He knew all the right buttons to press. He could always literally flatter the pants off her with his sweet talk. Alison knew his melliloquent glossing was merely flattery and deception, but she did not mind. Rather, her attitude seems to be that 'flattery will get you everywhere.'[22] That is, the Wife appreciates skilful glossing (even, or rather especially, of the deceptive kind). Jankyn is a cunning linguist, able to turn her into putty in his hands, so he can have his way with her and know *her* in the biblical sense. Hanning contends convincingly that:

> We have seen that in Chaucer's English, 'glose' could mean 'cajole' or 'flatter,' as well as 'interpret' or 'misinterpret'...it could have a person instead of a text as its direct object. The obvious reading of line 509 is that Jankyn cajoles Alison into having sex...presumably using his clerical skills of rhetoric. But I would argue that Chaucer here also intends for 'glose' the subordinate meaning of '(mis)interpret' with its suggestion that Jankyn can, by choosing the proper words, transform his wife into an obliging sex object even in the face of his aggression against her...in the very next line she refers to her sexual organ by a French euphemism which *we* must 'gloss' (19/20).

Thus, once again, a conflation of meanings [1] and [3] is apparent, with the novel twist here that a person is being glossed, not a text. Furthermore, the Wife seems to have been fully complicit in the process of being so glossed by Jankyn and, indeed, derived pleasure from it.

Thus, the Wife's ambivalent or ironic attitude towards glossing again becomes apparent. Despite the dismissive evaluation of *glose* evident in her first two uses of the term, she is actually an aficionado. Watts even goes so far as to describe her as "Chaucer's most famous glossator" in that, ironically, she "resorts to glossing in her attack on the practices of glossators. She provides texts in support of her claims and then proceeds to gloss those texts in a way that is favorable to her cause" (64). The Wife is "enlisting

the aid of Scripture at every turn" (Alford 197), but then she makes the text 'say' the "opposite of what it means" (Wood 38). As David declares, "a clever preacher could make out scripture to mean whatever he wanted it to mean, and the Wife of Bath's sermon is a masterful demonstration of that technique" (138).

The pilgrim Friar responds appreciatively to the Wife's performance, probably because he admires her glossing. Even so, he suggests she "lete auctoritees, on Goddes name,/To prechyng and to scoles of clergye" (III. 1276-77). In other words, leave using Scripture to "professional glossators like himself" (Alford 197). Alford asserts that, here in fragment III of the *Canterbury Tales*, a "pervasive concern throughout is the relation between letter and gloss" (197). The Friar, a "false glossator" (Carruthers 209), then tells his story of an "obtuse summoner whose inability to see beyond the letter to the spirit or 'entente' leads ultimately to his damnation" (Alford 197), provoking the pilgrim Summoner to exact revenge in his Tale of a friar receiving his comeuppance for all of his preposterous glossing: "Like the Wife, Friar John in the *Summoner's Tale* blatantly misuses biblical allusion, though his aberration is in the opposite direction...celebrating the gloss at the expense of the letter of Scripture" (Reiss 58).

Friar John soon displays his exaltation of glossing. Sick Thomas wonders why the friar has not visited him for a fortnight, and John replies with the excuse (a lie) that he has been busy praying for Thomas and saying sermons:

> I have to day been at youre chirche at messe,
> And seyd a sermon after my symple wit—
> Nat al after the text of hooly writ,
> For it is hard to yow, as I suppose,
> And therfore wol I teche yow al the **glose**.
> **Glosynge** is a glorious thyng, certeyn,
> For lettre sleeth, so as we clerkes seyn— (III.1788-94).

The friar does not teach directly from the Bible because, he claims, the likes of Thomas would not understand. Instead, he glosses. The *Riverside* notes *glose* and *glosynge* here as meaning "interpretation" (130, 1253), further specifying its sense of the "interpretation of the 'spirit' of a biblical text in contrast to its literal meaning" (877).

Once again, 'interpretation' might be the literal meaning of *glose*, but 'deceptive interpretation' (i.e., meaning [3] again) would seem more accurately to capture the nuance (or spirit) of the speaker here. He makes his glossing seem altruistic when it is entirely self-serving; "*Glossing* Scripture is the means here of laying open its difficult truth to the laity, while at the same time distancing the lay audience from the text" (Goodman 62). John quotes only the first half of the line in 2 Corinthians 3:6 ("the letter killeth, but

the spirit quickeneth").[23] The mere 'letter' is too pedestrian, too prosaic, to proclaim God's ineffable glory, which may instead be better conveyed through an animated, rephrased expansion, giving the 'spirit' (i.e., an honest, effective gloss). Thus, John "completely overlooks the primary meaning of the text" (Alford 199), this omission of the key part being "very much in the style of the Wife of Bath" (Goodman 62). Larry Scanlon explains that Friar John "embodies the power of glossing" with his "dubious theology" in waxing so panegyric about *glosynge* when it is really only a "stopgap, a provisional means of access to God's word": the "letter slays because human language can never fully contain the Divine Word...the friar has neatly misinterpreted the principle that the letter kills and has come to exactly the wrong conclusion...he sees it as a...continual opportunity to produce new meanings" (167). The friar uses "his learning to twist the meaning of Holy Writ rather than to reveal it" (Minnis, 'Glosynge,' 123).

The friar wants to give only gloss because the "letter" can be his enemy, constituting an inconvenient truth, contradicting the message that he wishes to convey. The truth gets in the way. As far as he is concerned, the devil is in the detail. The friar believes it far better, then, simply to gloss over such troublesome details and find or invent some interpretation more conducive to his own purposes. However, without the ballast of any actual Scripture, the friar is on very thin ice theologically. Robertson remarks that Chaucer "obviously had no use for the 'glosynge' of this friar" (332), and Helen Cooper comments that Chaucer's "references to the glossing of the Bible away from 'express' meanings tend to be wary or hostile" (42).

Before he can gloss the content of his sermon, though, the friar becomes distracted by thoughts of Thomas's wife. Here again, though, his "ability to 'glosen' is everywhere" (Alford 197) as he flatters her beauty (1808), asks her modestly for an immodest feast (a "rosted pigges heed," 1841), and claims to have seen their poor deceased child ascending to heaven (1854) in a vision.[24] He then essays to prove the goodness of friars and why God looks so kindly, with special favour, upon them and their work:

> I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,
> But I shal fynde it in a maner **glose** (1919-20).

The friar's outrageous words here recall the confession of Fals-Semblant in the *Roman*. Fals-Semblant admitted there was absolutely no mandate for mendicants in biblical text, nothing to suggest their (official) *modus operandi* emulates that of Christ and the apostles at all. However, artful glosses had been contrived to give that impression. Similarly, Friar John is forced to concede that Scripture does not support his grandiose claims of God's special approbation of friars. However, unlike Fals-Semblant, John is not about to admit to any deceptive glossing.

On the contrary, John will now undertake precisely such deceptive glossing, working to make the

support he needs materialise from thin air. He will contrive to find it “in some interpretation,” as the *Riverside* phrases it (131). Of course, though, this can only be a “deceitful interpretation” (meaning [3] again). As Besserman confirms, uses of *glose* are often given as ‘gloss, interpret, explain,’ “but context shows they are meant pejoratively, for the friar’s interpretations are patently deceitful” (67).

Other critics are equally scathing about the friar’s nefarious glossing and utter “contempt for the letter” (Alford 197). Fleming flays the friar for his “deranged hermeneutics” here in his glossing of Jesus’s words (“Blessed be they that povere in spirit been,” 1923) as sanctioning the existence and conduct of friars: “Needless to say, this eccentric explanation of Matthew 5:3 does not come from the *Glossa ordinaria*” (694). As Paul Ruggiers remarks, “even when he has no precise text, he can gloss...any of the gospels to redound to the praise of friars” (103). Robertson rues how the friar “neglects the literal sense completely, substituting for it ideas of his own; and a neglect of the letter...had been condemned by spiritual exegetes since Patristic times” (332). Edmund Reiss adds that, “in stating that even without Scripture he can produce a gloss...he virtually rejects the biblical text” (58). To the unwary, John sounds as if he is giving chapter and verse when, in fact, he is just making it up as he goes along. He is full of it.

Finally, though, the friar has his glossing, all his blowing hot air with trumped up interpretations, repaid in kind when Thomas comes up with a mighty ‘trump’ of his own (2149) for the dirty dozen friars to share among themselves through some tricky “ars-metrike” (2222. i.e., long, or perhaps, pong, division). Double entendres abound. Before receiving his “stercoraceous gift” (Ruggiers 107), John had asked Thomas, “What is a ferthyng worth parted in twelve?” (1967), showing his fixation with the bottom line. Yet the “windbag friar” (Ruggiers 103) John’s “scheme backfires” (Hanning 12) when Thomas drops that fyst in his fist, answering his afflatus with flatus. Then, ironically (given his love of glossing, with its “sacral fullness,” Scanlon 173), John proves himself a “hidebound literalist” (Fleming 694) by scurrying off to the lord for instruction on how to divide the fart’s “soun” (2273) and “stynk” (2274) among the twelve friars. The lord devises the ingenious plan (also a Pentecostal parody) of kneeling the friars “around the rim” (Hanning 12) of a “cartwheel” (2257), with Friar John directly beneath Thomas’s “tuwel” (2148) to ensure he reaps the “firste fruyt” (2277) of the fart. Thus, “the letter takes revenge on the ‘glosynge’ friar” (Alford 203); here is the “*gloser glosed*” (Hanning 12).

Instances of *Glose* with Clear Meaning [3]: “Deception” or “Flattery”

The remaining instances of *glose* in the Chaucerian corpus are altogether more transparent as the pejorative meaning ([3], i.e., flatter/cajole/deceive) of almost all is noted in the *Riverside* Glossary (1253). This meaning is clear in the Monk’s Tale as he affixes his moribund moral to the end of his “tragedie” of Hercules:

> Beth war, for whan than Fortune list to **glose**,
> Thanne wayteth she her man to overthrowe
> By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose. (VII.2140-2).

The *Riverside* gives *glose* here as 'beguile, deceive' (243) and/or "mislead, deceive" (877), and Besserman confirms the word is here used "pejoratively, roughly with the sense of 'to flatter, deceive'" (67). The Monk seems to be warning people that are doing well for themselves never to become too comfortable or complacent because Fortune will inevitably deceive them (once again, people rather than texts, are the objects of glossing) and bring them crashing back down, and they will never even see it coming. This is the Monk's fatalistic message, repeated in each of his 'tragedies.' Daniel Pinti describes the Monk's Tale as "imprisoned within the double discursive walls of text and gloss" (290). Similar to the narrator of the *Legend* (ordered to gloss by the God of Love), the Monk is something of a glossator himself in that he has to 'shape' (fraudulently) the biographies of each of his characters to make them fit within the same template (men of high degree suddenly ruined by capricious Fortune, rather than being the authors of their own downfalls in any way). Given Fortune's fickleness, the Monk advocates the Boethian option of rising above it all: "Ful wys is he that kan hymselven knowe!" (2139).

The inconstancy of Fortune is also a major theme of both the *Roman* and *De Consolatione*, and Chaucer's translation of the latter features another negative usage of *glosynge*. Lady Philosophy is berating Boethius (now in prison and down on his luck) for having fawned on Lady Fortune while his star was in the ascendancy, never imagining she would one day turn on him and deceive him:

> Tho yave thow woordes to Fortune, as I trowe, (*that is to seyn, tho feffedestow Fortune with* ***glosynge*** *wordes and desceyvedest hir*) whan sche accoyede the and norysside the as hir owne delices. (*Boece* 2.pr3.62-67).

The *Riverside* states that *glosynge* here means "deceitful" (1253), and this meaning is clearly reinforced by the context as the word *desceyvedest* itself appears in close conjunction.

Glose as clearly meaning "deceive" also appears in the Manciple's Prologue. The Manciple describes the unattractive physical condition of the drunken Cook with all-too-provocative candour:

> For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
> Thyne eyen daswen eek, as that me thynketh,
> And, wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure stynketh:

That sheweth wel thou art nat wel disposed.
Of me, certeyn, thou shalt nat been **yglosed**. (IX.30-34).

Yglosed here means “deceived, flattered” according to the *Riverside* (1253), which also suggests “to mislead verbally” (877, as Jankyn was a master of doing to Alison in order to woo her into bed). As he promises, the Manciple is certainly not mincing his words in his description of the Cook, nor is he ‘glossing over’ any details. He is not going to flatter the Cook in any way nor tell any little white lies to spare his finer feelings. Hearing these home truths, the Cook becomes so angry that he falls off his horse, although he is soon placated by another draught of wine.

This negative connotation of *glose* as “flatter” (also subsumed within definition [3]) is also to be found in *Troilus and Criseyde*. Troilus and Criseyde must be separated because Criseyde’s treacherous father, the seer Calchas, has arranged for her to be sent to him in the Greek camp in exchange for Antenor. She tells troubled Troilus, “I kan nat sen whereof ye sholden drede” (IV.1365) because (she claims) she can orchestrate her return within ten days. She boasts that she “will easily trick her father into allowing her return to Troy” (Hanning 12). She says she will butter him up by bringing him some presents and telling him they are from old friends in Troy, and this little lot is just for starters because they want to send much more, if he will let her go back there again to get it all. Thus, claims Criseyde, Calchas will be doubly delighted: first, to discover that, apparently, the Trojans do not hold him in such contempt as he had imagined; and, second, because he will covet those gifts. At that point, he will surely give her the green light to return. Criseyde predicts, “I shal hym so enchaunten with my sawes” (1395). Even if his priestly divinations cause him some initial misgivings, she will shoot them down: she will “berem hym on honde” (1404, “swear to him, deceive him,” *Riverside* 556, a phrase also used by Alison, III.32, to mean “deceive, convince of a falsehood,” *Riverside* 1220) and tell him that he is misinterpreting the Delphic directives (his ‘spidey sense,’ or perhaps ‘Poseidon sense,’ might be tingling, but it is off). She has even rehearsed the lines that she will deploy in this contingency:

Ek, ‘Drede fond first goddess, I suppose’—
Thus, shal I seyn—and that his coward herte
Made hym amys the goddess text to **glose** (IV.1408-10).

The *Riverside* gives this *glose* as “interpret” (556), but, of course, the overall sense here is that Calchas will *glose* “amys” (i.e., “misinterpret”) the message that the gods are cryptically conveying to him. Thus, in a way, Criseyde seems to imply, the gods’ “text” might deceive Calchas (meaning [3]), so he should trust her own text (her sworn words) instead. This is her cunning plan to *glose* (flatter, deceive) her father, and she

appears confident that she will "don my red withinne a day or tweye" (1413), so Troilus should not fret.

Criseyde seems to believe that she can twist language in order to twist her father around her little finger (just as Jankyn was able to *glose* Alison). Hanning explains this connection: "through two of his most memorable characters, Criseyde and the Wife of Bath, Chaucer capitalizes poetically upon the extension of meaning whereby 'glosynge' comes to signify deceitful cajolery or flattery" (40). In this scene, Criseyde gives a "dubiously optimistic set of readings (or glosses) of the lovers' desperate situation," seeing the "world through rose-colored glosses," as it shows Criseyde 'glosynge' Calchas to win his acquiescence in exactly the way she is 'glosynge' Troilus to win *his* acquiescence to her departure" (42/43). She seems to be deluding (or deceiving) herself here as much as she is Troilus, trying to put on a painted smile (painted with the colours of rhetorical artifice) to avoid having to face up to the reality that she will not be coming back.[25]

However, Troilus refutes her arguments and says that, *au contraire*, Calchas will 'glose' *her* so that she will never return to him. Troilus fatalistically predicts that Criseyde will become the "*gloser glosed*" (just like Alison and Friar John; all shot with their own arrows):

> Ye shal ek sen, youre fader shal yow **glose**
> To ben a wif; and as he kan wel preche,
> He shal som Grek so preyse and wel alose
> That ravysshen he shal yow with his speche,
> Or do yow don by force as he shal teche;
> And Troilus, of whom ye nyl han routhe,
> Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe! (IV.1471-77).

The *Riverside* offers "flatter, cajole" (1253) for *glose* here. The close collocation between *glose* and 'preche' here again intimates how intrinsically the two seem to have been linked in the popular imagination of the time. Troilus fears that Calchas, being such an accomplished orator (and as calculating as his name suggests), will use some deceptive discourse to flatter and finesse her into marrying a Greek (including by skillfully praising the potential suitor even *in absentia* in order to advance the match, ironically in much the same way Pandarus wooed Criseyde for Troilus). Failing that, laments Troilus, Calchas would simply "force" her to marry the Greek, using all the tact of Genghis Khan.

In the Squire's Tale, a strange knight comes to the court of King Cambyuskan to present four magical gifts, and, in doing so, this knight delivers what is perhaps the most damning usage of *glose* in the entire Chaucerian canon as he employs it as the very antithesis of truth. Having presented the magical steed, mirror, and ring, the knight then reveals the sword that can inflict mortal wounds through the thick-

est armour. Such gaping wounds can only be healed in one way, explains the knight:

> Ye moote with the platte swerd ageyn
> Stroke hym in the wounde, and it wol close.
> This is a verray sooth, withouten **glose** (V.164-66).

The *Riverside* gives "deception" (1253) for *glose*, and Besserman believes that, here, it "comes close to meaning 'to lie'" (67). Goodman also observes the telling "opposition of *verray sooth* and *glose*" (61) in this instance; the "opposite of a gloss is truth" (Getty 53). *Glose/glosynge* seems to be the *non plus ultra* of, or the last word in, dishonesty and deception.

Finally, to come full circle, the Parson, in his Prologue, also seems to posit truth and *glose* as being antithetical. Following St Paul, he wishes his discourse to be full of "soothfastnesse" (X.33), so he vows, "I wol nat **glose**" (45). As mentioned above, this *glose* perhaps has the nuance of meaning [2], 'to use circumlocution,' but it also contains the more prevalent, and more malign, nuance of meaning [3], 'to deceive.' The *Riverside* gives this *glose* as "to mislead, deceive" (877). Besserman concurs that the Parson "seems to mean 'I won't deceive people with poetic fables'" (68). Carruthers claims that the "Parson, of all the pilgrims, might be supposed to be the most friendly towards glossing, but he carefully dissociates his tale from the word" (214n). He is prepared to "take a stand against *glosynge*" (Besserman 67). In doing so, "Chaucer suggests an easy separation of gloss from text" (Watts 60).

However, it would almost certainly not be accurate to claim that the Parson does not, in fact, gloss at all. Glossing in some form seems to be all but inevitable whenever a preacher comes to present a part of the Bible. If this glossing is done properly, in its purest, unsullied sense of meaning [1], 'to interpret,' then, ideally, text and gloss would go together seamlessly (as opposed to Friar John's sermons in which text and gloss jar against each other). The Parson seems to approximate (or at least aspire to) this ideal, whether in terms of spiritual or literal interpretation, or even, perhaps, both. Robertson claims that his Tale "contains very definite traces of the spiritual interpretation of Scripture" as he "explain[s] his text clearly and straightforwardly" (335): "His sermon is developed from the text of Jer. 6.16, but it is clear that he does not take it literally…The sermon thus hinges on a spiritual interpretation…The parson thus neither reads his text carnally, abuses the spirit for his own interest, nor denies the validity of the spirit beneath the letter…insofar as it is exegetical, it makes no departures from the traditions of Pauline allegory" (476). Meanwhile, Besserman believes that the Parson's Tale is "far more 'literal' than 'exegetical.' Chaucer's ideal churchman presents numerous biblical verses in English to a lay audience, concentrating most often on the literal level of interpretation...the Parson's use of the Bible is faultless" (68, 69). If only people would gloss in the same way as the Parson does, then the term might not have degenerated into a byword

for deceit.

In conclusion, while the negative meaning [3], 'flatter' or 'deceive,' of these last six or seven instances of *glose* is acknowledged, the preceding analysis of the other twelve usages of *glose* that appear in the Chaucerian canon (as printed in the *Riverside*) should have shown that they are almost always also employed with negative undertones of meaning [3] (or, far more rarely, meaning [2]). The ostensible meaning might be [1], 'interpret,' (as correctly given in the *Riverside* Glossary); however, the darker undertones of [3] seem to be quite clearly revealed when each usage is analysed within its proper context. In fact, it seems that on only one solitary occasion, very early in his career (the *Book of the Duchess*'s narrator's vision of "both text and glose" of the *Roman* on the wall), does Chaucer ever use *glose* to mean "interpretation" (meaning [1]), with no apparent hint of any undertones of [3]. That constitutes only once in nineteen instances. To quote the Summoner and employ some "ars-metrike" (once again, long division), that means that a whopping 95% of the time, Chaucer uses *glose* in some pejorative sense, intimating that perhaps previous studies might have slightly underestimated quite the extent to which Chaucer uses the term pejoratively.

Thus, Chaucer appears to have regarded the term as being even more malignant than has so far been recognised. For Chaucer (and his contemporaries), the word quite possibly acquired this stigma from its association with heretical exegetical practice, hypocritical churchmen (especially friars) 'glossing' Scripture in insidious and invidious ways. As David explains, "To gloss or explain the meaning of a text was, of course, the object of preaching, but abuse of this technique in Chaucer's day, the practice of finding ingenious and self-serving interpretations, had proceeded so far as to make 'glosynge' practically synonymous with distortion of the text" (138). In other words, the practice of 'glossing' the Bible had come crashing down from its previous lofty, and once seemingly inviolable, perch right alongside the text itself. Such gloss was now considered not the 'essence' but an excrescence. It had mushroomed into Scripture but was now regarded as a foul fungus. The stigma of this association of *glose/glosynge* seems to have imprinted itself powerfully on Chaucer's mind, and, consequently, on the pages of his works.

Thus, even on occasions when Chaucer is not using *glose* in the specific context of Biblical exegesis, the term still almost always appears to carry the same negative nuance from that association. For Chaucer, it seems, the meaning of the word had become irrevocably transmogrified. It was a dirty word. However, he was certainly not averse to 'glossing' in other senses. He was an active participant in the universal, unquestioned tradition of "text and gloss" manuscripts: having his works glossed by others, also glossing them himself, as well as glossing the works of others. On occasion, he even went so far as to incorporate the glosses of other people into the actual text he was writing. Thus, Minnis maintains that "a very true word was being said in Chaucer's jest. 'Glosynge' should certainly be regarded in a positive light, perhaps even as a 'glorious thyng'" ('Glosynge,' 124). In addition, his whole creative technique

might be described as ‘glossing’ on a prodigious scale (i.e., reworking the texts of other writers, giving his own new ‘interpretation’ of them). Perhaps this view of ‘glossing’/interpretation as a means of creative production is somewhat evinced by the fact that six of the *glose/glosynge* references are found in Prologues (plus one in an Epilogue), where concerns about the way in which the Tale should be related are often articulated (or where some intimation of the ‘spin’ on the story is often given). Similarly, the vision of the *Roman*’s “text and gloss” helped inspire the narrator to compose the *Book of the Duchess*. Chaucer does not appear to have been ‘anti-glossing’ *per se* at all. Similarly, even the harshest fulminators against fallacious Scriptural exegesis were by no means opposed to all glossing.[26] The stigma that *glose/glosynge* had acquired, possibly through its association with specious exegesis, seems to have tainted the term nominally and indelibly in Chaucer’s mind, resulting in the almost exclusively pejorative usages of the word in the Chaucerian canon. However, perhaps inversely proportional to his dislike of the actual term, the broader concept and practice of ‘glossing’ seem to have been much to his liking. Indeed, his entire method of composition might be defined as a *glose* by any other name.

Endnotes

1 Besserman’s study is comprehensive in checking usages of *glose/glosynge* in the *Canterbury Tales*, but Chaucer’s other (older?) works are beyond its mandate. Goodman and Watts both pick and mix *glose/glosynge* usages from about half the Chaucerian works that feature them. Besserman examines Chaucer’s mostly pejorative uses of *glosynge* in the context of the attitudes towards Scriptural exegesis of Chaucer and his contemporaries; Goodman charts the degeneration of *glosynge* from its previously exalted function into something distinctly negative, with the meaning of distortion; and Watts applies a post-modernist reading of Chaucer’s glossing as reflecting issues of textual authority. Getty also explores such issues, cogently contending that, in *LGW*, Chaucer does not concur with the God of Love’s views that his texts need more explicit “glose.” Getty’s brief tabulation of all Chaucer’s uses of *glose* is the most comprehensive to date (in number); however, as this is incidental to her main point, she does not analyse each usage in detail/context. This can lead to slight confusion, such as when she states that it is the Summoner that loves to *glose* “to extract money from people” (53). In fact, though, it is the friar of the Summoner’s Tale (whom the Summoner ridicules) that loves to do this. The fact he is a glossing *friar* is very significant, especially in the context of Fals-Semblant’s uses of *glose* in the *Romaunt of the Rose* (which Getty does not mention).

2 The *Riverside*’s Glossary does not include the uses of *glose* in III.26 (WBPro), X.45 (ParsPro), II.1180 (EpiMLT), Tr IV.1410, or Rom C 6556.

3 This observation is not intended as a criticism of the *Riverside* at all. Of course, a Glossary cannot, and should not, explain the subtle nuances beneath every single word as used in each context. As Larry Benson rightly notes, the entries "are necessarily brief" (1211).

4 Irvine observes that "early manuscripts of the *Glossa ordinaria* on the Bible reveal that the layout for the biblical gloss was directly adapted from that used for Latin secular *auctores*" (88). The *Glosa* was compiled in the twelfth century and became the "most widely used 'spiritual' interpretation of the Bible in Chaucer's day–firmly based on the writings of the Church fathers" (Besserman 66).

5 Minnis quotes nineteenth-century critic H. F. Stewart bemoaning the "multitude of glosses" ('Glosynge,' 106) Chaucer put on *Boece*, regarding it as evidence of Chaucer's poor translation. On the contrary, though, contemporary practice indicates effusive glossing was considered all good.

6. The highest concentration of these marginal Latin glosses accompany WBPro & Tale, MLT, PardPro, and SumT, ClT, MerT, and FranT (*Riverside* 797). Caie comments that the Wife's "gross perversion of Scripture" through her "partial paraphrases of Paul's teaching occasion the largest flood of indignant glosses in all glossed manuscripts" (355), so the "glossator could ensure that the reader was not deceived" (351). Caie also notes that the "gloss is a subtle and important comment on the text and need not, therefore, have been written by Chaucer"; it "may well be the work of more than one hand" (357). Silvia suggests that, "Although glosses were not generally made by authors themselves but instead by scribes or 'glossators' who felt the need to explain or elaborate on what the authors had already said, certain glosses of the *Canterbury Tales* seem clearly to be the work of Chaucer's own hand" (28n). If he did indeed write them, Chaucer would not be the only eminent author to put a D.I.Y. gloss finish on his own work: others include Boccaccio (see Silvia 38), and Gower (see Minnis, *Medieval,* 109).

7 In the case of the evolving reproductions of an important manuscript, it would clearly not be true to claim that a rolling stone (tablet) gathers no gloss. With the *Consolatione*, Minnis mentions that "to find a 'clean' unglossed text in manuscript is quite rare" as glosses "were handed down from one commentator to another, new interpretations were added (often alongside earlier ones which contradicted them)" ('Glosynge,' 107): for example, the 'Aristotelian' Trevet's reaction "against the Neoplatonism in William of Conches' Boethius commentary" (108) in his glosses. Pinti describes the similar waves of glossing on Dante's *Inferno*, with commentators "'re-placing' the poetic text into a different work with its own agendas" (277). Thus, each successive wave of glossing represents an "exertion of mastery" (Hanning 29) over

the text, an attempt to boss the gloss. Yet these waves also reveal the paradox inherent in the practice: such glossing simultaneously "both instituted canonicity and blurred the boundaries of a text" (Irvine 95). On one hand, as Carolyn Dinshaw explains, "Glossing is a gesture of appropriation; the *glossa* undertakes to speak to the text, to assert authority over it, to provide an interpretation, finally to limit or close it" (122) by securing and inuring the 'meaning'. How can one possibly 'read between the lines' of a text if that space is literally already filled with an interlinear gloss providing the only 'correct' interpretation? On the other hand, though, these glosses could not disguise their inherent subjectivity forever as they were challenged, modified, or replaced over time. As Foucault found, "the task of commentary can never, by definition, be completed" (quoted Irvine 82); it thus represents a somewhat Sisyphean endeavour in that it posits itself as the last word, but never can be.

8 The *Ovide Moralisé* was a "fourteenth-century French verse translation of, and moralized commentary upon, the *Metamorphoses*" (Delany 123), "quite explicitly an extended gloss on traditional textual *materia*" (Irvine 97). Chaucer alludes to it in the *Book of the Duchess* (52-55); however, adjudges Justman, "When he mined material from this work he took the stories and left behind the moralizations" (208).

9 There are 2 ways of looking at this figure of the horse and carriage as representing the (previously perfect) conjunction of text and gloss. If the gloss is the 'carriage,' then the way in which some preachers prioritised gloss over the text of Scripture (i.e., not getting it straight from the horse's mouth) represents putting the cart before the horse. Or, if the gloss is the 'horse', then, similarly, by ignoring Scriptural text (i.e., ditching the 'carriage'), the unbridled horse is free to bolt and run wild in any direction it pleases.

10 Similarly, Minnis maintains that, "In Chaucer's day, it was fully recognised that scholastic methods of textual interpretation could explain away instead of explaining. This feeling was not new. Alan of Lille had declared that an authoritative passage 'has a wax nose, which means it can be bent into taking on different meanings'" ('Glosynge,' 123). Beryl Smalley observes that, by the mid-thirteenth century, the word "*glosa* was acquiring a pejorative meaning. It implied 'glossing over' instead of stating frankly what the author intended" (271).

11 The Summoner, in his Prologue, shows 20,000 friars living up the "devel's ers" (III.1694), and his Tale of the hypocritical friar "turns on the fraternal compulsion to gloss a text" (Goodman 62). Given this compulsion, it is not surprising that the *Ovide Moralisé* was put together between by an "anonymous Franciscan" (Minnis 205). The short history of the friars had been characterised by contentiousness. The Franciscans were the first order founded, early in the thirteenth century, on the principle of "evangelical

poverty" (Williams 502), begging their livings. Soon, though, the Conventual Franciscans sought some "papal glossing of this rule" (Fleming 691), bringing them into conflict with the hardcore Spiritual Franciscans. Factions of Franciscans also fought with Dominicans and even the Pope (see Williams 500), who sanctioned them and protected them against their critics, such as William of St Amour. William's *De periculis* (1256) was hugely critical of friars (listing 39 'signa' by which to recognise false apostles, including II. flattery and deceit; VIII. teaching their own traditions rather than the lessons of the gospel; and XVIII. desiring gold and silver). William especially wanted their growing power in the universities curtailed. Instead, though, William was the one compelled to leave the University of Paris when Pope Alexander IV ordered him into exile and his book burnt. Nevertheless, this attack on friars crossed the English Channel in the form of two major (related) waves. Firstly, in the 1350s, Richard FitzRalph weighed in with his "main attack...directed against the usurpation of the rights of the parish clergy" (Williams 503). Then came the attack of the Wyclifites in the 1380s, who regarded the friars' "persecution of the true gospel" to be their "chief offense" (Williams 504).

12 FitzRalph ranted against the glossing of Scripture, the "tumult of philosophers chattering against [God]" (quoted Goodman 65), and, in the late 1370s, Wyclife wrote his work *On the Truth of Sacred Scripture*. Ironically, though, friars had originally been fervently anti-glossing. Hanning adduces the "respect for the Word of God in its pure form shown by Francis" and the Franciscan legend in which the voice of Christ tells Francis that, "I wish the Rule to be obeyed to the letter, without a gloss, without a gloss" (30). By placing the letter in such ascendancy, their original motto might be succinctly summarised as "Word up." However, the worm (or perhaps word) seems to have turned when the friars "invaded the universities" (Hanning 30) and started churning out glosses galore in books, in conjunction with all their glossing in preaching. After this damnably Damascene conversion, they put their books and breviaries to even more irreligious misuse than Rabelais's own Friar John.

13 As Besserman explains, the mendicants were worried about losing "their monopoly on the Bible" (70), so they claimed they "opposed vernacular Bibles because they worried about errors creeping into a translation...and...that the literal sense of Scripture might mislead the laity" (69). Conversely, Wyclifites believed a "common-sense reading of Scripture would reveal the shortcomings of the friars to one and all, and mislead no one" (70). The Wyclifites sought the "direct application of Scripture in vernacular translation and without accumulated exegetical glosses...A Lollard tract on translating the Bible shows that the absence of gloss...is the important thing"; however, it "was precisely this lack of gloss that the opponents of scriptural translation opposed, because of its subversive potential" (Delany 120).

14 Getty also makes the connection between how the Parson and the Merchant use *glose*: the Parson's "reason for this lack of glossing is that he is not learned enough...the Parson's honesty is tied to his lack of ability to deceive—telling the plain truth instead. The same connotation is given by the Merchant to explain why he cannot use circumlocutions when describing the actions of Damyan and May up in the tree" (53). Charles Owen called that scene "soft pornography" (quoted Mosser 368); however, Daniel Mosser describes how a later reader of the MS that is the subject of his study felt the urge to 'sex it up' even more by interpolating 3 lines (after 2353, including a reference to a "greet tente a thrifty and a long"). Like the Merchant, this eager beaver reader clearly felt he had to call a spade a spade (or perhaps stretch it to a large tool, in this case).

15 Watts makes a convincing case in developing this argument (first made by John Fleming, *The Roman de la Rose: A Study in Allegory and Iconography*, Princeton UP, 1969), including quoting *glose* references from Jean de Meun's *Roman* (c. 1275-80) not found in the English Fragment C translation, but which nonetheless resonate with uses of *glose* in the *Canterbury Tales*. Watts declares that "the instance of glossing...perhaps most familiar to readers of the Roman occurs in the lover's dialogue with Reason," in which she assures him of the "proper use of the 'coilles' (testicles) for the propagation of man" (60). This is also a matter on which the Wife of Bath will later touch, in her gloss on St Jerome. Alison, though, euphemises about "membres...of generacion" (III.116), "oure bothe thynges smale" (121), "his sely instrument" (132), and her own "instrument" (149), her "*bele chose*" (510). In contrast, Lady Raison's 'ballsy' refusal to euphemise about such "thynges" angers Amant. He protests (6933/34) that she "has not glossed the word with some courteous utterance" (Watts 61). He wanted her to phrase 'coilles' coyly, to supply even a minimal gloss of the word (a little Raison 'glosette'). However, she retorts that "'it is not necessary resort to euphemism when speaking of good things that have been created by God...I name noble things through plain texts, without resorting to glosses,' 6957-58...Like Chaucer's Parson, Jean's Raison prefers the plain text of God's creation unencumbered by the circumlocutions of glossing" (Watts 61). Thus, perhaps the Merchant should again not feel so bad for not euphemising about Damyan and May's treetop tryst. (As an aside, also resonating with that scene, is a *Roman* manuscript described by Robertson, which "contains, among its marginalia, representations of women plucking 'fruit' in the form of male genitalia," 328n. In the *Roman's* sustained allegory, of course, the 'rosebud' stands for the desired Lady, and, in the climactic scene, this 'rosebud' is fain plucked—literally and allegorically, not to mention spooneristically—by Amant). Watts also observes, though, that *glose* in the *Roman* "does not always carry...negative connotations" as, elsewhere, Raison "suggests that in its proper form glossing can clarify what is obscure in stories and strip away the integuments with which the poets clothe the truth in their works" (61).

16 Scanlon describes how antifraternalists rubbished "mendicant pretensions to the *vita apolistica*," often citing "one of antifraternalism's fundamental biblical texts, II Timothy 3: 1-6" (165), on which William of St Amour had written "elaborate glosses" (Fleming 692). William was a "hero" (David, *Riverside* 1114) to de Meun, and he refers to him and his book (*De pericules*) in the *Roman* (lines 6763 and 6785 of the English *Romaunt* C) and reprises his antifraternal arguments through his depiction of Fals-Semblant. FitzRalph picked up on the same theme in his attack on the friars, claiming that "Christ was not entirely without possessions, that he never begged voluntarily...hence the friars were not following the higher perfection of his example" (Williams 506). Echoing William and Fals-Semblant, FitzRalph "challenged the friars to produce one scriptural text commanding poverty or proving Christ ever begged voluntarily, but the friars hit back by saying FitzRalph "respected only the text of Scripture, not the gloss...'*solum textu respexi, non glossas*'" (Williams 511). David confirms that, "The Bible does not say that Christ and the disciples begged" (*Riverside* 1114).

17 The *Riverside* tentatively suggests that the 'glose' alongside the text of the *Roman*, as seen in the *Duchess*'s narrator's vision, could mean "illustrations," as in "mural decoration." Or it could just be the more literal meaning of "textual commentary," with 'bothe text and glose' here thus representing a "formula meaning the whole story" (969).

18 Getty interprets Chaucer's view of the God of Love in a similar way. The God claims that, in the *Roumant* and the *Troilus*, Chaucer's "crime" was that the "narrator did not gloss the stories, adding in the moral asides and marginalia that some...thought necessary to protect against misreading (or rather, more accurately, to protect against reading correctly)" (53). The God cannot allow any degree of 'reader autonomy.' Thus, in *LGW*, to "follow the God of Love's commands, the narrator must gloss (i.e., misrepresent) the stories, rather than telling the 'verray sooth'" (53). However, "Chaucer rejects the God of Love's views of writing" (68), the "rather ridiculous God of Love" (52), only pretending to follow his orders in *LGW*. Troilus might have been coerced into issuing a "*mea culpa*" to the God of Love (II.525, cf. I.932-38), but Chaucer is having none of it. Getty contends that the God "is angry about the lack of glossing in works written before the *Legend* " (53), yet Chaucer swiftly resumes writing without such tendentious *glosynge* after *LGW*, in the *Canterbury Tales* (in which he uses the term *glose* so negatively that his dim view of it seems clear). As Patterson avers, "the *Legend* is the road not taken after the *Troilus*: in its…principle of organization (an externally imposed homology)…it represents all that the *Canterbury Tales* is not" (236).

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19 EpiMLT features in 35 MSS of the *Canterbury Tales*, but not in 22 MSS, inc. Hengwrt and Ellesmere (see *Riverside* 862). Some rather contentious and confusing points attend it; however, it was written by Chaucer and contains a usage of *glose*, so perhaps is fair game for inclusion here.

20 The identity of the pilgrim that speaks these lines in EpiMLT is one of the confusing points (see *Riverside* 862/3 and 1126). Various manuscripts give various pilgrims as the speaker: the Shipman, the Summoner, the Squire, and the Wife of Bath. It seems that Chaucer was still in the process of matching tales to tellers and setting the order when he wrote (then discarded?) this Epilogue. The pilgrim that interrupted would presumably have been earmarked as the next tale's teller (hence advocates of the so-called Bradshaw shift argue that, if the interrupter is really the Shipman, then his tale should follow the Man of Law's Tale, rather than the Wife of Bath's Tale. See *Riverside* 1121). All such debate only serves to reinforce the impression of the "instability of most medieval texts" (Irvine 85).

21 The *Epistola Adversus Jovinianum* was "St Jerome's treatise against the fourth-century heretic Jovinian" (Silvia 29), and St Paul was "Jerome's chief authority in *Adversus Iovinianum*" (Justman 201). Robertson bristles that the "support for her position that Alison is able to derive from St Paul is obtained only by quoting him out of context or by disregarding the obvious implications of what he says. This device, of course, is the simplest means of avoiding the spirit of a text" (324).

22 Similarly, in her tale, Alison admits, "A man shal wynne us best with flaterye" (III.932). Next to this line, on the MS Camb. Dd. 4, 24, a glossator has inscribed an arch "*Verum est*" as a "cynical aside" (Caie 78).

23 Besserman notes that the very mention of the line "the letter killeth" was enough to set the alarm bells ringing in Wyclifite ears that a dodgy interpretation of Scripture was imminent: "it seems to have been the slogan of parties they regarded as corrupt" (66).

24 Somewhat analogous to how Jankyn *glosed* Alison, Friar John appears to be trying to *glose* (cajole, deceive) Thomas's wife here for his benefit. There is the meal she prepares and lets the friar tuck in to; in addition, Williams mentions "charges that friars particularly seek out women and *spiritually* seduce them...friars give cause for scandal by their frequent and close association with women as confessors and counselors" (512), and so the situation in the Summoner's Tale "of the friar using his influence with the wife to gain the confidence, and money, of the husband is precisely paralleled in William St Amour" (513), who perhaps made the connection with II Timothy 3:6. Furthermore, Williams claims that when John

"kiste her sweete, and chirketh as a sparwe/With his lyppes" (1804/5), it is something of a "scandal" (511). The sparrow was proverbially held to be "lecherous" (GP 626). Alison also makes a "sly allusion" (Patterson 312) to the friars' friskiness, saying that women should watch out for "incubus" lurking limitours, eager to "dishonour" them "in every bussh" (III.879-81). Hubert, the pilgrim Friar, carries knick-knacks "to yeven faire wyves" (GP 234), illustrating Wyclife's charge that friars did this "to gete love of hem" (quoted *Riverside* 808). Chaucer also tells of Hubert: "Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,/To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge" (GP 264/5). The tongue, the *glossa*, is prominent.

25 Mieszkowski agrees that these are a "flood of hollow plans" (119) from aggressive-passive Criseyde. Behrman, meanwhile, argues that although Criseyde never intends to enact such plans, her description is just an "attempt at rousing her lover to action" (328) because she "still yearns for her lover to prevent the exchange," but Troilus "fails to play the role of the manly hero" (327).

26 Minnis mentions that "in the early fourteenth century, Rolle provided glosses to his English Psalter" (190), while the "early Wyclifite [Bible] included an English gloss on the gospels" (Besserman 70n).

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